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SPRING FLING STYLE

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STI TESTING KEPT IN CONFIDENCE, BUT SOME MIGHT WANT TO USE AN ALIAS

BY ANDREW PAUL

Like most things revolving around sexually transmitted infections (STIs) it came out of nowhere.

"The information they collect during STD tests isn't kept confidential," a man insisting on remaining anonymous tells me over the phone. "Have you seen the information they collect? Anyone can tell whether you're gay, what drugs you've done, even whether you're a top or bottom. I can't believe this."

Actually yes, I have seen the information they collect during the exam process. I've given up that information.

I have made the nerve-racking first phone call to book an appointment. I have sat waiting for the two weeks leading up to my date with the nurses at the Edmonton STI Clinic. I have completed the personal history acquisition that probed the deepest, darkest depths of my sexual experiences. I've pissed in a cup, and sat splayed open like a Thanksgiving turkey as the nurse delivered the sweet cotton caress of that dastardly swab. Furthermore I've waited that god-awful week after the exam for my results — which came back negative, by the way.

That's the testing process in a nutshell, and it was one of the smartest decisions of my life. This is why I was a little worried about the anonymous man's warning.

Regular STI testing is paramount to public health, and if people like my anonymous caller have privacy concerns that are keeping them from getting tested regularly, that's no good for anyone.

THE NUMBERS

"In all of the infectious disease reports in Alberta, close to 70 per cent of them are sexually transmitted. That sort of puts into perspective what we're dealing with," says Penny Parker supervisor of the Edmonton STI Clinic (Suite 3820 11111 Jasper Ave.). "This clinic receives on average 2,200 client visits a month, that's not separate individuals, just visits."

The 2009 numbers are still in the works, but stats from the Communicable Disease Program in 2007 showed clinical visits for STIs increased by 29 per cent to 21,521 from

“ I’VE PISSED IN A CUP, AND SAT SPLAYED OPEN LIKE A THANKSGIVING TURKEY AS THE NURSE DELIVERED THE SWEET COTTON CARESS OF THAT DASTARDLY SWAB.



ILLUSTRATION BY DORIAN EISENBERG

15,280 in 2002. Chlamydia was No. 1 on the STI hit parade with an infection rate of 319 per 100,000, followed by gonorrhea at 88 per 100,000. Since 2003, a syphilis outbreak has hit the city with four out of the five congenital cases in 2007 being fatal.

That's some serious stuff, but despite the risk of spreading STIs, people should be concerned about the confidentiality of the information collected during the exams.

PRIVACY PROTECTION

"Everything is bound under the Health Information Act," Parker says, explaining that my anonymous phone caller's info might be erroneous. Everyone who works in the health care field must sign a confidentiality oath as part of their employment, Parker explains, "and there are some pretty harsh sanctions when that line is crossed," she says.

"There could be a huge fine," says Wayne Wood spokesman for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta (OIPC). "We have the ability to recommend to Alberta Justice that prosecution be done. We did one about a year ago where a secretary in a health clinic in Calgary had been snooping on somebody else's files, and she ended up in court and was fined \$10,000."

So, while privacy is breached on rare occasions, your information is pretty safe. But before you decide to get tested it's important to have a healthy understanding of the exam process and information trail.

THE PROCESS

Mondays or Fridays are kept open for walk-ins at the STI clinic, but most of the time it's best to call 780-342-2300 to book an appointment two weeks in advance.

They will ask you for your name, but you can use an alias if you like. Parker says. Just remember what alias you use, and not to include your Alberta Health Care number, because the names won't match.

Two weeks later you will visit the clinic where you'll be asked to fill out a check-in form asking for some identifiers including your name, date of birth, reasons for attending the clinic, and your Alberta Health Care number.

If you're using an alias, ignore the identifiers but complete the rest of the form. The nurses and desk clerk will use this form to see if you have visited the clinic before, or if you haven't the information will be put on your anonymous, numerically coded clinic chart.

Next you'll be ushered into the examination room. Registered nurses perform all exams with training above the required standard to perform the exams.

First on the list is the clinic history form that will get pretty personal, but is necessary to pinpoint what tests are relevant to you based on the risks you've identified. This process is in conjunction with the Alberta Health and Wellness standards for the evaluation and management of STI clinic patients, and helps save time and money at the provincial labs that perform the tests.

"There are blood tests, urine tests, the swab, pelvic exams on women, pregnancy tests — there's a whole array

of test that are done based on the sexual history," Parker says.

After the test, samples of various plasma and juices are collected you are sent home while they go to the lab.

Now it's time to wait in fear for one week.

YOUR RECORD

If the tests come back negative you are free to go.

If a test is positive, treatment is decided on a case-by-case basis, and trained nurses will contact any partners of yours who may have been at risk of infection. They will never give your name out, Parker says.

However, the Public Health Act requires all positive test results to be entered into the provincial STD database under your anonymous numerical chart number where the information is examined by epidemiologists to track outbreaks of infectious diseases, which is a good thing.

The database is "accessed through a secure portal," Parker says. "Anyone who does any data entry into it has to be security cleared and authorized by the province, so there's no one outside of the STD clinic, to be perfectly honest, who can get into that other than the people at Alberta Health. That database is secure, it's closed, and no physician outside of this clinic, no nurse outside of this clinic or Alberta Health has access."

Your test results may also find their way onto Alberta Netcare, a province-wide electronic health record.

Who sees this record?

"Health care providers who are providing care to the individual," Parker says. "Not every Tom, Dick and Dr. John, however."

For example if you get in a car accident the ER physician can post his medical notes on any kind of treatment he provided to you on Netcare. When you go to your family doctor later on they will be able to access the ER physician's notes and find out what happened.

Netcare is audited daily, a privacy standard required by the OIPC, for irregular activity meaning anyone caught searching files without a clinical reason can face severe penalties.

"Fines of up to \$100,000 are included in the prosecution under any of our acts," Wood says.

If you feel your privacy has been infringed you can call or visit www.oipc.ab.ca to file a complaint. The office will then deem if the situation warrants a second look, before deciding to proceed with a case.

So, yes, your information will be seen by health care employees, but it is up to you to decide if that risk outweighs the importance of your health.

Our Man Hits The Town on Persian New Year



MY TOWN SCOTT LINGLEY
LINGLEY ON THE PERSIAN NEW
YEAR, THE OILERS, PUNK ROCK
AND (SHUDDER) ANNE COULTER

Nowruz mohorok, friend and neighbour! In case you missed it, we recently passed Nowruz, a.k.a. Persian New Year, being that the first day of the Iranian calendar falls on the vernal equinox, which sort of bears out the cultural archetype of Persians as a poetic people. Nowruz actually starts mid-day, at precisely the moment the sun is directly over the equator and the globe is exactly split between light and dark. That's some nice imagery, Persians.

I learned too late of a big Azerbaijani shindig at one of the many convention-friendly hotels arrayed along all Edmonton's major block arteries, which had presented the prospect of unprecedented ecotism and hopefully a great abundance of scrumptious alien foodstuffs with names I'd never heard.

Instead, while the Persian-Canadians and Canadian-Persians and assorted Zoroastrians of Edmonton

hailed the rebirth of the year with food, socializing and music, I attended a rite that was more like a wake — the Oilers winding down their season with a tardy win against San Jose. Without a post season to look forward to, a dazzling 5-1 victory is just so much self-tiddling and the bare patches in the seats evinced that not everyone was interested in paying to self-tiddling. Looking back, the whole experience seemed a little by rote. Everything seemed to play out by rote from the automatic, joyless consumption of junk in the stands to the short-lived scuffle that netted Zack Stortini a five-minute major for fighting. Had the overpriced pilsnater beer really lost its flavour, or were we all dimly aware we were just

Heatley's ears: don't go dissing the Oilers. That's our job.

Continuing my post-Nowruz rampage, the next night I took Edmonton's other favourite pastime — punk rock — with a loud and rowdy all-ages show at the Starlite featuring Buffalo's Every Time I Die and a couple of other bands I really didn't care about. At one point I looked over at my friend Jerry who stood just on the edge of the melee that erupted around third-on-the-bill Bostonians Four Year Strong, of whom the audience approved very much. When I looked over a moment later, Jerry was no longer there, but he reappeared but he didn't have his hat anymore. Seems some whippersnapper had lined up the skinny guy with

pendant for spitting in the air and catching it their own mouths as they played. Wild flailing abandon up front, a well-cited metallic rock machine under the hood, weird time signatures and surprisingly witty lyrics, especially if, as vocalist Keith Buckle would have had we believe, some of them were inspired by Teen Wolf. All the same, I lamented the bygone days when the Starlite Room's previous incarnations hosted punk rock shows that gave local bands a chance to open for their more successful counterparts and absorb a little gravitas. Local bands would clamour for slots like that but these days, especially for big punk or metal shows, the bill comes prepackaged with out-of-town acts with, judging

wing blowhard in a little black dress manowred to parlay her string of appearances at Canadian universities into the sort of sensationalized free-speech dust-up that's been oxygen to her entire bullshit career. Perhaps we were lulled into a state of vulnerability by our post-Nowruz euphoria, but we gave Coulter an opening to trot out the calculated xenophobia upon which her reputation is based and to indulge in that most pathetic of fallacies, the trope of the persecuted conservative, shunted from the public square by combined forces of liberal media bias and political correctness.

The commentators who turned this into an issue about Canada's restrictive free-speech laws (Glen Greenwald of Salon.com called them "creepy") were no less duped by the faux-controversy, since at no time was Coulter ever under threat of legal action. It was popular outcry that shut down her Ottawa appearance and dogged her talk in Calgary.

At least most observers agreed that Anne Coulter is a kneejerk provocatrice-for-pay whose claims to fame are thinly predicated Muslim-bashing and homophobia, and that our biggest mistake was ever paying attention to her in the first place. But that's the joy and beauty of the time of year we call Nowruz: in the season of renewal and rebirth, you never run out of opportunities to do a little bit better.

MOST OBSERVERS AGREED THAT ANNE COULTER IS A KNEEJERK PROVOCATRICE-FOR-PAY WHOSE CLAIMS TO FAME ARE THINLY PREDICATED MUSLIM-BASHING AND HOMOPHOBIA.

going through the motions with our on-ice heroes? Or maybe the whole NHL thing looks a bit washed out after the nerve-prickling euphoria of Olympic hockey.

In any event the crowd dutifully booed number 15, Dany Heatley, every time he touched the puck. Heatley's crime, you'll remember, was refusing to play for Edmonton when he requested to be traded from the Ottawa Senators in 2009. Hopefully the message rang loud and clear in

the glasses from within the pit and made a beeline for him, shoving him backward into the crowd behind him. Jerry remarked that this didn't reflect the basic moshing etiquette he'd come to know as a crowd-surfer in the heyday of Spartans Men's Club and Bonnie Doon Hall, when Edmonton made the punk rock that everybody else listened to. At least someone handed him back his hat.

Every Time I Die put on a winning show, despite their disgusting

by the evening's non-stop singalong, an established fan base.

Unless you're Anne Coulter, in which case your business is giving them what most sensible people will deplore, along with awkward evasions regarding what, if any, value you contribute to any issue you stick your pointy, oddly masculine nose into. And yet, despite the transparency of her provocations, we played right into her hands. The shrill, nonsensical and utterly irrelevant right-

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LETTERS

HYPOCRISY?

The March 10 issue contained a piece about rejuvenation efforts on 18th Avenue in Edmonton. While not explicitly saying in the piece that prostitution is rampant or bad for the 18th Avenue area, it is certainly alluded to in the article.

I also recall a piece in your publication some months back about the worldwide illegal sex trade and how girls from other countries are being brought into Canada under false pretences and forced to work against their will in prostitution across the country. This piece was well written and its content quite shocking.

And yet, despite your high moral stance on these issues, your services advertise what are very clearly sex services in your paper. An advertisement on page 24 of the March 10 issue leaves little doubt as to what this massage parlor is offering potential cli-

ents. And this "business" is located on 18th Avenue!

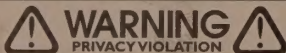
It stinks of hypocrisy and is an insult to your readers. The fact that you support these "business" by allowing them to advertise is shameful. The fact that you pontificate about rejuvenation of known red light districts and all the while advertise these same red light operations is a disgrace.

LIAM KELLY

PRaise for Roberta

As a Reiki Master, I generally shudder when I come across articles purporting to describe Reiki. For, like religion, it is difficult to encapsulate in a meaningful, accurate way. May I offer a standing ovation to Roberta Shepherd: she writes clearly and concisely and precisely explains a complex healing art in its entirety.

ANGELA AIREY, R.M., M.N.P.



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— Bloc Quebecois MP Carole Lavallee explaining the difference between high-brow and low-brow entertainment. The Globe and Mail, March 31

IN PRAISE OF ED STELMACH

This publication along with pretty much every other paper in Alberta, has been pretty hard on Premier Ed Stelmach.

Perhaps it's time to change our tone. Perhaps it's time to say a few good things about Ed Stelmach.

First, let's be fair — Ed Stelmach inherited a difficult situation when he took over from Ralph Klein. The waning days of the Klein era were some of the most prosperous in Alberta history, thanks entirely to soaring prices for our much coveted commodities, but the worldwide economic collapse resulted in a prolonged period where oil and gas prices circling the drain, resulting in billions fewer dollars pouring into the provincial treasury. Stelmach was faced with essentially the same province, with the same demands from the population for health care and services... but with a whole lot less money to provide those services. Is that his fault? Hardly.

Faced with a lose-lose situation, Stelmach has come up a winner. He has selected a

cabinet of articulate, skilled politicians, none of whom got their jobs just due to cronyism. He has made judicious, surgical cuts to the budget to get the insane Klein-era spending under control. His government has shown flair and imagination that few expected from the modest northern Alberta farmer.

Perhaps the biggest surprise about Bill Stelmach has been his superior communication skills. Not since Peter Lougheed have we had a provincial leader who is as adept at communicating messages as Stelmach. Not once — dare we say it? — William Aberhart has Alberta had a leader who can deliver fire and brimstone from the provincial pulpit. Watch Question Period from the Legislature for a few moments to see how he commands the room, and commands the respect of all those around him.

Maybe, just maybe, we're lucky to have a premier like Ed Stelmach. He is, indeed, a rare breed... almost as rare as getting the opportunity to write an editorial on April Fool's Day.

CANADA VERSUS ANNE COULTER

Last week, the shameless provocateur Anne Coulter made a whirlwind trip through Canada, and it couldn't have worked out better for the repellent American.

First, the provost of the University of Ottawa, Francis Houle, sent Coulter an e-mail warning her to mind her tongue while in Canada. For an educated person, Houle isn't particularly bright. He should have known that sending a condescending email like such a shameless publicity whore was simply playing into her manicured hands.

Next, students at the U of Ottawa protested, just loud and long enough that someone — likely Coulter's own people, recog-

nizing the publicity value that it would entail — decided that it wasn't safe for Coulter to spew her venomous verbal poison.

forcing the cancellation of the event. U of O students were pilloried from coast-to-coast for their supposedly anti-free speech stance, when in fact they were doing what students have been doing for years — protesting. Good for them for voicing their opinion; just as good for Canada in rejecting her opinion, so to do the students at the U of O.

The lesson from the Coulter controversy? The Canadian media, which was played by Coulter like a cheap violin, still has a bit of growing up to do.



POINT OF VIEW • CITY POLITICS

Me for Mayor: Why Not?



OUTSIDE POLITICS **NAURICE TOUGAS**
WITH MANDEL, A MORTAL LOCK TO WIN, SOMEBODY MUST STEP FORWARD TO CHALLENGE. AND THAT WOULD BE ME.

Last week's announcement by Stephen Mandel that he intends to see a third term as mayor pretty much took all the air out of the civic election.

Certainly there is no shortage of ambitious city councillors and would-be egotists in town who would like to park their bumps in the mayor's chair for a while. But success in politics is more often the result of circumstances and funding than the quality of a candidate. Notice that when a city councillor retires, dozens of opportunists show up on the ballot to fill the void. It's the same thing with the mayor.

In all levels of politics, incumbents have a substantial edge (with the exception of being a Liberal MLA in Alberta, where incumbency isn't

worth a pail of warm spit). It's even greater in civic politics, where the defeat of an incumbent happens about as often as an abdication. Yes, Don Iverson defeated sitting city councillor Mike Nickel in the 2007 election (for which we are still grateful), but it took a truly prodigious amount of work on Iverson's part and boundless negativity on Nickel's for that to happen. In fact, Nickel's defeat to Iverson was the first time an incumbent had been defeated in Edmonton since 1995, when voters turfed a stunning four incumbents. Mind you, that council was once of the worst in Edmonton history — or anybody's history.

Incumbent mayors can be beaten, of course. Mandel did it with his surprise victory over Bill Smith in 2004 (the race was widely seen as a battle between Smith and Robert Nock), but Smith was going for a fourth term, and his 'Edmonton is the greatest city in the greatest province in the greatest country in the world' schtick had grown wearisome, if not embarrassing. Mandel has only been mayor for six years, which is not a long time in politics. By the end of his third term, it will be nine years as mayor, and by then I think we will be well and truly sick of him, and he of us.

But for now, I like Mandel. And by 'like', I mean I don't find him personally offensive, which is about the most you can hope for in a politician. A mayor who is generally popular, untouched by scandal, and reasonably competent is virtually unbeatable, which is why we won't see any legitimate contenders for the mayorality. And when the mayorality is not an interesting race, voter interest drops. (In Calgary, when Dave Bronckhorst was running for his second term in 2004 and was seen as unbeatable, voter turnout was a shameful 18 per cent. Bronckhorst isn't seeking a fourth term this year, so expect to see Calgary voter turnout soar — maybe as high as 25 per cent.)

With all legitimate contenders waiting in the weeds for Mandel to tire himself out by 2013, I think this is as good a time as any for an illegitimate candidate to step forward.

And that would be me. Therefore, I am proud to announce that I will be throwing my hat into the ring and running for mayorality of Edmonton.

First item on my agenda: buy a hat to throw into the ring. I could throw a toke into the ring, but it's not the same.

TOUGAS cont'd on pg. 6

BY THE NUMBERS • THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

THE USE OF APPS FOR CELL PHONES HAS SOARED IN RECENT YEARS, WITH APPLE LEADING THE WAY. SOURCE: REPORT ON BUSINESS MAGAZINE

APP STORE SIZES BY NUMBER OF APPS

Apple 150,998

Android 19,987

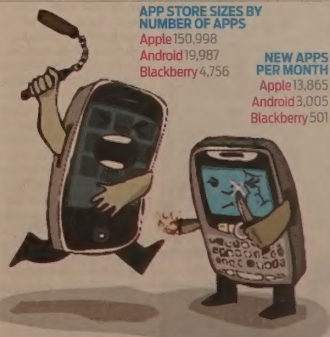
Blackberry 4,756

NEW APPS PER MONTH

Apple 13,865

Android 3,005

Blackberry 501



TOUGAS (cont'd from p. 5)

Second item on my agenda: find out where the hell this 'ring is.

While I don't expect to win – although if I did, I promise to try really, really hard, until I get tired of it – I feel it is incumbent upon me as a candidate to offer some policy. Here are some of the highlights of the Tougas Contract with Edmonton.

• As mayor, I will hold the line on taxes, and here's how I'll do it. I will tell all city departments that they will be getting zero increase in their budgets. No questions asked, no exceptions. Any department manager who comes to camp asking for more will be fired on the spot. I'm thinking about putting the manager in a stockade like they used to in olden times and have the public throw rotting fruit as the guy, but that might be considered a little extreme.

• On the new arena question, I say build it. But only AFTER Daryl Katz chips in that \$100 million he promised to get the project going first. All this talk of hotels and office towers and casinos after the arena goes up is all conjecture. Put your money on the table, then we'll talk.

• As for the World's Fair of 2017, I say pull the plug on the thing. We can only handle one transformative project at a time, and that would be

the arena. Besides, world's fairs are so-o-o 1967.

• I propose a multi-pronged attack on the litter crisis. I would hire however many people we need to travel around the city all year picking up litter (this would be a great opportunity to put hobos to work). How will we finance this extravagance, particularly in light of my hold the line on taxes pledge? Simple: since the majority of litter on the streets comes from convenience stores and fast-food outlets, I would institute a five-cent-a-cup "environmental levy" on all coffee/pop/slush containers and cigarette packages to fund the litter collection costs. And I'd put the squeeze on business owners. Any business that allows excessive parking lot litter will be subject to a \$1,000 fine, and every convenience store/fast food outlet will be responsible for any litter within a 100 metre radius of their business. That'll learn 'em.

There. That's a start. Now all I have to do is befriend 100 people to sign my nomination form, and somehow raise \$500, and it will be official. I even have a slogan: "TOUGAS! The Least Objectable Alternative."

Care to commit to the Tougas mayoralty campaign? Let me know at mauricetougas@live.com

POINT OF VIEW • DINING

Not The Best, But Still Good



SIT & CHAT CAFE DOESN'T LIVE UP TO BILLING, BUT PROVIDES DECENT CARIBBEAN FARE ON THE EDGE OF JASPER PLACE

SIT & CHAT CAFE
10049 50th St.

BY SCOTT LINGLEY

It might be a lot to expect from any Caribbean restaurant this far north to transport you to whatever facet of ambience and food to a sunny island paradise, but the Sit & Chat Cafe might be especially hard-put from

its thrift store selling clothes by the pound (it also shares a corner with the unfortunately named Chin Kee Chinese Restaurant, but the less said about that the better).

Once we found the door, we discovered a tidy, smallish café space splashed with early evening sunlight and a few early diners. Despite pervasive promo materials for musical events of interest to the local Caribbean community, there was a conspicuous absence of music in the room. We were quite excited on a quick gloss of the menu that the appropriate elements were in place for our choosing: jerk chicken and pork, oxtails, goat curry, escovitched (or some phonetic variant) snapper and kingfish. Or were they?

The server returned for our order. My co-diner asked for the goat curry (\$11.99) – but not with the roti,

I'll try the oxtail. Oh and can we get an order of fried plantain to start? No plantains. So which appetizers do you have? The fried dumplings (\$2.25). Okay, we'll take some of those. Something to drink? Sure, I'll have a Carib. No Carib, but we have Red Stripe. I didn't say this aloud, but I think Red Stripe tastes like it made with someone's socks. Corono! Please.

The sun streaming through the window felt nice and the restaurant was filled with the sound of two cute little girls learning how to share a small electronic device. There was not much time to sit and chat before the dumplings came out on a pretty white dish with a bowl of dark dipping sauce. Note to prospective buyer: fried dumplings does not imply warm dumpling. The four big golden balls of fried dough tasted like home-

THE TAB: \$25 FOR TWO, FOOD ONLY

THE GIST: CLAIM OF "BEST CARIBBEAN" STILL UNSUBSTANTIATED

TRY THIS: CURRY CHICKEN (\$10.50)

BWARE: FOOD SHORTAGES

their vantage on the edge of Jasper Place. From what might be the smallest, most treacherous parking lot in Edmonton, the heavily applied visage of the Sit & Chat – one swath of which informs you via red starburst that it is "The best Caribbean restaurant in Edmonton" – gazes across a grimy stretch of 156TH Street at a sizable adult entertainment emporium (one of two in the immediate vicinity), a donair shop and a char-

burtery where they were out of roti – and started to choose the two sides she'd been encouraged to select on the menu. But tonight, we were told, it all came with rice and peas and some slaw. I was hoping to try the escovitched snapper, but they were out of it. In fact, they had no fish at all. Okay, how about the curry chicken (\$10.50). Sure, the server said, but in case we don't have enough what's your second choice? Um, I guess

made donuts before your granny rolls them in sugar, and the dip had a vinegary-fruity tang with a dab of heat.

The entrees were not far behind the dumplings, but they were much warmer. Both plates featured piled up meat on the bone immured in gravy-like curry sauce and a reasonable mound of creamy slaw.

The server set down a big bowl of rice and peas between us and went in to get glasses of water as we went to town spooning rice into our pools of sauce.

I was quite happy with my generous portion of curry chicken, which came away easily from the bone in moist shreds and had soaked up the distinctive Jamaican curry flavourings of allspice and a hint of coconut. The rice and peas – and by peas, the usually mean kidney beans – were perfect for mopping up the stray meat and mildly spicy sauce.

My co-diner was less fond of the goat curry. She thought the meat-to-bone ratio favoured the inedible parts of the goat, and I had to agree from my sample that the available meat was rather chewy. I surrendered a few pieces of chicken in parity.

When we were finished the server seemed to realize the narrowing of menu choices may not have made the best first impression and apologized for our earlier guessing game. All was forgiven when we saw that, even with an imported beer, the bill was quite fair for how full of food we felt.

The best Caribbean restaurant in town? I hope not.

But what they had for us to try was not too bad at all.

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AGA MAN • PROFILE

Renaissance Man

THE AGA'S GILLES HÉBERT SPEAKS
CANDIDLY ABOUT ART, EDMONTON
AND LIFE WITHOUT HIS FAMILY

BY PIOTR GRELLA-MOZEJKO

Leading an institution of the importance and size of the Art Gallery of Alberta is a gargantuan task by any standard. It requires 24/7 commitment and availability – and AGA's executive director, Gilles Hébert, knew it right from the start.

"My family's still in Windsor, but – let me ask rhetorically – isn't that better?" he says, with easily discernible bitterness and a kind of strangely sanguine resignation. "After all, here we're now working such long hours, almost no one has any life outside the gallery. Even if I'm not in my office, I go out and meet people because this is what I think a person in my position must do: go out and meet people. You've got to know your community. Our local community is AGA's bread and butter. As it were, they're our support base right here – and we must hear them out. So, what family life would I have, at least for the time being?" Hébert underscores what he says with a powerful gesture, as if opening his heart for everybody to see how serious he is about his mission of making the AGA a world-class institution.

"What can I say," Hébert matter-of-factly continues, "my wife doesn't like the nomadic existence I lead. She's a successful architect and researcher. In her line of work, it is important to stay where you are over long periods of time to set up a base for your projects. Yes, I'm most worried about her, because when she finally moves to Edmonton it will be hard on her and her career. She'll have left behind something that she had firmly established, something she'd gotten attached to. For her, continuity is crucial. But I'll tell you this: although I've been all over the place and am used to moving, I wouldn't mind putting down roots somewhere. Perhaps Edmonton is it," he emphatically concludes.

North American francophones since time immemorial, Hébert's family on his father's side came to Canada from Louisiana, while his mother's family hails from Montreal. Born in Winnipeg and raised in the Prairies, Hébert received education in Social History and Film from the University of Manitoba and attended the Ontario College of Art and Design, then known as Ontario College of Art, Canada's oldest postsecondary arts school and one of the best in the world.

Hébert seems to be a perfect fit for the job he was given in October 2009, and which by all accounts he is doing remarkably well. Not only has he enjoyed a very strong reputation in the areas of project and exhibition organization and development, but he is highly respected for his important – many say groundbreaking – work in video, with projects like "Alleyway" and "Town Without Pity" already classics in their category. To the AGA and Edmonton, Hébert brings a lifetime worth of creative and administrative experience. His C.V. is impressive, to put it mildly, including directorial jobs at the prestigious Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, where he produced the celebrated retrospective of art work by Joni Mitchell, and the Art Gallery of Windsor, where he manifested over and over again his personal dedication to Canadian artists.

"Prior to getting my first 'real' job at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1991, I'd been your typical struggling freelancer, so I understand what artists must go through to pursue their dreams. This is why I try my best to help. Of course, I'm realistic, too. I know some decisions won't be accepted immediately, but that's part and parcel of the trade," he says.

"During those freelancing years, I did a lot of work in multimedia and community-based projects, and this has since remained at the centre of my personal interests. It doesn't mean, however, that I'll ignore other forms of artistic expression. In Canada we have such a wealth of talent it would be a sin to favour one phenomenon over another. Let me put it this way: to me a place like AGA is not just a gallery, it is a centre of and for culture in its entirety. It is a 'multitasking' place.

"I'm a product of my time, you might say. I'm not about specialization, but about integration. My professional life is a never-ending curatorial project. There's inherent risk in it, but also a lot of fun."



The man behind the gallery:
Gilles Hébert
PHOTO BY KENE GROSSO

City Gets Ready To Wear



Fashion Week celebrates the both the wearable and non-wearable arts. PHOTO SUPPLIED

FASHIONISTAS AND FASHION-PROBES ALIKE WILL LOVE THE MANY OFFERINGS OF WESTERN CANADA FASHION WEEK

WESTERN CANADA FASHION WEEK

Vancouver Venues, April 1-8

www.edmontonfashionweek.com

BY ROBIN SCHROEFFEL

Look out, world — Western Canada Fashion Week is back and it's on the rise. With a new name, a new season, acclaimed designers from across the nation and a week-long program packed with runway shows, contests and entertainment, the former Edmonton Fashion Week is setting itself apart from the masses with its all-encompassing arts focus, community spirit and world vision.

As founder, creative director and executive producer Sandra Sing Fernandes explains from her perch on a vintage couch in WCFW headquarters, Planet Ze, "It's about connecting all the arts to work together."

Fernandes recognizes the symbiotic relationship that the fashion world has with other creative media and makes a point to incorporate those connections into WCFW. Musicians,

dancers, visual artists and even comedians all have their place at Fashion Week.

A designer, stylist and artist who found international success during a 15-year stint in New York, Fernandes has applied her hard-earned expertise to build WCFW for a diverse audience. Without sacrificing quality, she's managed to create an event that is accessible, inclusive, and, according to Fernandes, a total blast. "You never know what's going to happen the night that you're there. You might have a 15-minute [fashion] show, then a singer, then a 15-minute show, and prizes are given away. People who don't know anything about fashion will love it; it's really exciting to be there."

The recent name-change to WCFW was sparked by the growth of Fashion Week over its 10 seasons. This time, renowned designers from as far afield as New York (Michael Kaye), Toronto (Joelle Caci) and Vancouver (Jason Matto, Marta Gottler) will show their latest collections alongside up-and-coming homegrown talent. The event's reach is increasingly broad, something that's reflected in the new name.

Despite its stretching wings,

WCFW's focus remains on supporting, promoting and connecting new designers and local talent. Its Emerging Designer Contest, in which entrants vie for the chance to show a 10-piece collection next season, is a major event. Competitions are also held for costume design, fantasy hair, fantasy makeup and stylists; anyone interested in participating can visit the WCFW website for information on both the contests and the in-house mentorship program for young designers.

True to its all-embracing mandate, it's not just the local fashion designers that benefit from WCFW's efforts. Fashion Week runway shows give models of all levels an opportunity to strut their stuff on the runway. "Because we're here to support and make a community, we use all kinds of models. We want to give people that experience," says Fernandes.

With WCFW quickly gaining notoriety outside its home base, Fernandes is hoping Edmontonians will sit up and take notice of the talent exploding in their own city. She's here for a reason: her firm belief in Edmonton's artistic spirit. "In some ways it was the worst place to do fashion because we're not known as a fashion town," says Fernandes. "But in so many ways Edmonton was the best place to do it. I've met some of the most amazing people since I've been back here, creative, wonderful good spirited people, kind people, very talented and it's been amazing."

Thanks to the efforts of WCFW, Edmonton is making a name for itself on the fashion map.

Says Fernandes, "People [outside] know we're good; we just want to let the rest of Edmonton know we're good at what we do."

PUPPET SEX - PREVIEW

It Ain't Child Play

GIANT DINKS DON'T MAKE FOR YOUR TYPICAL PUPPET SHOW, BUT OLD TROUT TAKES ON XXX IN DON JUAN

THE EROTIC ANGUISH OF DON JUAN

By the Old Trout Puppet Workshop

On now until April 18

Royal Theatre (708/488-5131)

BY STACEY LAWRENCE

The Old Trouts are not afraid of a little debauchery. Shadows cast by giant breasts and enormous cod pieces may intimidate the average Joe, but to these puppet masters they are merely ingredients in their sinful recipe for what promises to be delicious show, *The Erotic Anguish of Don Juan*.

And Duval Lang is Don Juan, well... almost. Since everyone knows the Latin lover must be dead by now, Lang plays the ghost of Don Juan, shackled in hell, imprisoned by heavy chains attached to his, let's call it "substantial," iron-clad chastity belt.

Hard times (and likely hard metal) have reformed the Spanish womanizer of his wicked ways. He convinces the hellions to release his giant link (Lang said it, not me) so that he may in turn convince the audience of the error of his ways. "But he keeps tripping over himself," says Lang, "when he spots a beautiful lady in the audience, for example, or several beautiful women. He's so desperate and a bit horny."

He retells the story of his life, presumably so we can see where it goes all wrong, and out come the puppets.

"I think the world of puppetry allows you more of an opportunity to explore the outrageous," Lang says.



Not quite Puppetry of the Penis, but Old Trout goes erotic in Don Juan. PHOTO SUPPLIED

"It's a kind of Dali-esque representation of what's in Don Juan's head because he's in a world of lustfulness," Lang describes one scene with a cantina dancer represented by nothing more than erotic female bits. "He just pads after her and they do this wonderful dance of body parts."

So what's it like dancing with puppets instead of people?

"There's this wonderful challenge," says Lang, "of giving yourself 100 per cent in terms of the emotional connection that one usually has with another actor on stage, but to do it for an inanimate object. Your focus is on this face or body that's been made out of paper maché and glue and wood and you're convincing the audience that you are desperately in love or in lust with a puppet — that's a blast."

This isn't the first puppet show for adult eyes created by Old Trout.

"Their themes are quite often sophisticated," says Lang, "and they're a little off the wall. Their design elements are spectacular in the set and the puppets themselves. They do everything with large bit of tongue and cheek."

And they're not afraid of big topics. This one is about love. And this case they wanted to look at what is our take on love these days. Is it important for people to be faithful to the ones they love, or is it better for society as a whole if you can love as many people as you like without having a great deal of strings attached.

Of course what better way than to raise Don Juan and his myth out of the fog and allow him to lead us through that kind of discussion which in some cases may ring true to some people in the audience. For others it's just this wonderful romp through his escapades.

Sounds like Don Juan may actually have a few good tips on love to bring home.

"Well I don't know if they're tips that you'd want to take home to any kind of relationship that you value," laughs Lang. He promises "a holy orgy" will be offered and at the very least "it's going to be a great time."

SPEECH AND DEBATE

by Stephen Karam

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» APRIL DEAN

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Students' show titled "In Between Surfaces."

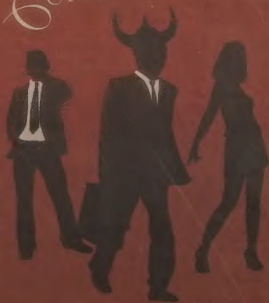
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Bold New Season for Citadel

AS THE CITADEL LAUNCHES THE GLASS MENAGERIE, IT ALSO ANNOUNCES AN EXCITING NEW SEASON OF THEATRE

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Directed by Tom Wood, starring Shaun Smyth and Fiona Reid
Shoctor Theatre, Citadel Theatre Complex, until April 18

BY JENNY FENIAK

Most know the Citadel is Edmonton's A house for world class theatre. But its great efforts and accomplishments may not be such common knowledge. While most playhouses perform an average of eight theatrical pieces every season, the Citadel usually stages 11 works, and as artistic director Bob Baker explains during a brief break in his hectic schedule, as many as 14 in years past.

The upcoming 2010/2011 season, kicking off on Sept. 18 with Billy Bishop Goes to War is no different. "We try to do two premieres a year," Baker explains, and this year's picks are two revived classics — *Hunchback* adapted from the famous Victor Hugo novel, and Tom Wood's take on *The Three Musketeers*.

Along with the new season, the Citadel has announced a new academy that will amalgamate established partnerships and theatre programs into one comprehensive effort towards creative development for professional theatre. The Robbins Academy will combine the Citadel's various theatre programs, young companies and Foote Theatre School with the Banff Centre's partnership program to encourage and ensure the growth and creation of the best theatre work possible.

The Citadel's Rice Series certainly exemplifies these aims. This year, the series kicks off with a production



Fiona Reid and Jennifer Mawhinney in the Citadel's *The Glass Menagerie* PHOTO BY DAVID COOPER

from Vancouver's edgy Electric Company Theatre group, which will play in the Shoctor Theatre from Oct. 30 to Nov. 14. *Studies In Motion* combines text and choreography to tell the controversial story of Eadweard Muybridge, who invented moving pictures in the 19th century.

Following this is *Another Home Invasion*, an examination of the issues seniors deal with in our modern society that Baker says, "is shockingly, understandably, unsurprisingly relevant for any age, any time."

And Brad Fraser will see *True Love Lies*, his witty comedy about the "perfect" Canadian family, round out the series this time next year.

New work is infused throughout the season, including *The Robbins Family Series*, which has *Rick: The Rick Hansen Story* opening on Apr. 2. Baker explains the story incorporates Hansen's life prior to his accident and through it, culminating with his famous cross-country trek.

And what would a Citadel year be without Wood's adaptation of the

Charles Dickens classic *A Christmas Carol*. "It is a play Edmonton audiences have come to adopt as a Christmas tradition," says Baker.

And a classic piece is the latest at the Citadel right now.

Wood is directing a stellar cast in one of Tennessee Williams' most famous plays, *The Glass Menagerie*. Starring Shaun Smyth and Fiona Reid, it's a story about a mother tortured in her search for a savior for daughter, while her son struggles with the lure to leave home against the guilt of abandoning his family.

Most interpretations play the daughter, Laura Wingfield, as simply a sensitive and shy personality. But as Baker explains, Laura is mentally ill and her character is much deeper and more complex. It's here that Wood and his cast excel, confronting this dark and difficult reality head on.

The Glass Menagerie runs until Apr. 18 in the Citadel's Shoctor Theatre. For more information on this season and next, visit the Citadel online at www.citadeltheatre.com.

We Rock SXSW



WILD LIFE FISH GRUBBING

EDMONTON REPRESENTS AT THE BIG AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL, AND THE SADIES ARE BACK IN TOWN

The *Whitsundays'* return from SXSW was full of funny stories and half-recalled brushes with cutting-edge culture. Running into Lyle Bell at a coffee shop, he detailed a series of hotel wrestling moves with the enthusiasm of a UFC commentator, including what computer equipment was violated by the violence.

His opponent, Paul Arnusch, meanwhile, was kind enough to go into more detail about the annual music confluence, which this year was attended by Edmonton's Hot Panda, certified favorites Shout Out Out Out Out and the dreamy *Whitsundays*. They played one of their two gigs at a high-end furniture store, the other at Lamberts, nestled in the diagonal crossword-puzzle of

Spanish-named streets.

"I took in so many good bands, it's such a well-run festival," Arnusch says, starting the roll call. "The first day I was there I went to the Rough Trade showcase and saw a guy named Dylan LeBlanc, so good." LeBlanc plays smooth Americana, and like the bands we're about to talk about, check 'em on MySpace. Arnusch: "He was opening up for Warpaint, who were totally awesome. I just played a show with them in Calgary a couple days before, but this was completely different."

The singer also saw and recommends Bloomington, Indiana's DM Stith (creaky indie space flamenco) which he saw while recovering from the wretched sickness brought on by a "wet burrito."

"Oh No Ono sticks out, a band that's on my record label," he adds. "They're from Denmark, really psychedelic, atmospheric, but really well-written pop songs. They sing in English and have a really good stage charisma. It feels like they're influenced by classic composers, yet they're still really condensed songs and they're not afraid to change the tempo suddenly, but tastefully. The song 'Helplessly Young' I keep listening to."

SXSW cont'd on p. 11

The Science of Disconnection

Destiny, Discovery, Deceit. The Lise Meitner story.

Written by:

David Belke

Music by:

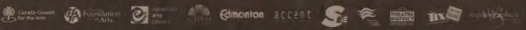
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JAZZ STANDARDS. DON BERNER
FORGET PARIS. APRIL IS A
GREAT MONTH FOR JAZZ IN
EDMONTON - DON BERNER
GIVES US 10 REASONS WHY

"I'll remember April." Not only the name of a bop standard, but also the feeling Edmonton's jazz scene generates this month. In a time when most folks are overly busy and dealing with economic turbulence, it can seem a less appealing prospect to go hear some live music. Therefore, here (in no particular order) are the top 10 reasons to go catch at least one act:

1) It's a good way to meet friends. Or buds as the case may be.

2) Brian Hughes leads his quintet at the Yardbird Suite (April 9-10). Born in Alberta, Hughes has, as is the case with many Canadian artists, experienced much greater acclaim by moving south of the border. He'll be returning home for a set of dates where he'll be joined by his regular drummer Tal Bergman, along with Alberta based sensations Mike Leier, Luis Tovar, and Andrew Gleier.

3) It's good for brain. Me get smarter.

Fairly persuasive arguments can be found in Daniel J. Levitin's book *This is your Brain on Music*, as well as Dr. Dee Coulter's neuroscience investigations which conclude that listening to jazz increases theta wave activity in the brain, putting one in a more creative state.

4) At the Copperpot, one of Edmonton's youngest musicians terms the stage Kent Shores, a 19-year-old who skill level belies his age, has studied with the likes of



Wunderkind Kent Shores plays the Copperpot on Apr. 21 | PHOTO SUPPLIED

Bobby Cairns, Jim Head, and Mike Rud. He will present an evening of standards and original material April 21.

5) Live music is a big part of economic stimulus. Don't believe me? Check out the 2005 "Economic Impacts of Arts and Culture in the Greater Edmonton Region" report done by the Edmonton Economic

every Sunday evening this month.

6) Civic Pride. We're a city that's able to support and hold on to world class musicians.

9) If you're a fan of big band music you have the opportunity to go see some accomplished young players, when the MacEwan University big bands play the Haar theatre April 12. The bands will perform origi-

PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS CONCLUDE THAT LISTENING TO JAZZ INCREASES THETA WAVE ACTIVITY IN THE BRAIN

Development Corporation to see exactly what the arts do for finances in this city.

6) The Ritchie United concert series kicks off this month, beginning April 25 featuring Rollanda Lee. If you've never heard live jazz before, Rollanda's love of traditional Dixieland (think early New Orleans) is a great point of access for new listeners.

7) There's a spate of new venues popping up. Supporting them ensures they continue to exist. The Blue Chair Cafe begins a Thursday night jazz series this month, in addition to performances by Jim Findlay

nal works from writers such as Bob Brookmeyer, Sammy Nestico, and Gordon Goodwin as well as arrangements by Bob Mintzer and Bill Holman.

10) The simplest reason - it's fun. Whether tapping your toes to Dave Babcock (whose "Jump Orchestra" releases their new CD April 17 at the Yardbird Suite) or having the Bob Tildesley Duo expand your mind with more eclectic sounds (April 7 at the Copperpot), music helps us forget our everyday trials and tribulations, elevating and entertaining us.

Now go out and see some Right now. You'll be glad you did.

those fans, but I just wanted to tell you you're the best." And Bill Murray shakes his head and says, "I know." Armusch laughs. "He just looked like he was on top of the world with a 26-year-old super-hot girlfriend. He looked like he was in a movie. I hate the idea of celebrity, but Bill Murray is something special."

The Whitsundays' new album *Saul* comes out May 4 and is pretty damn great. More on that later, though.

Just a few things to watch out for in the coming weeks. Photographer Ted Kerr lets us know about the upcoming Edmonton Women's Film Society festival, *Reel Femme*. This year's movies look at rebuilding Haiti, the creative urges of Canadian women and a film called *Crackie* starring

Mary Walsh. More information on the April 10 lineup is at ewfs.ca.

On Whyte, Ben Disaster is at the Black Dog Saturday afternoon which should be awesome, while Colleen Brown hits the Empress Wednesday night, still vibrating from her shows opening for Hawkley Workman. Also exciting, the Sadies will be back May 27 at the Starline Room, tickets on sale now at Blackbirdy, Listen and Freecolud, the best place in town to get old K-Tel records. While you're in the neighbourhood, drop by the old Prince of Wales Armoury where the city's archives are and look at our city's proud history of blackface singers! Uh, scratch that, maybe a some historic aerial shots are perhaps less shocking.



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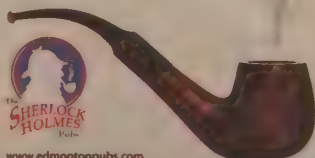
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XSXW (cont'd from p.10)

also enjoyed Washed Out, Japandross, Memory Tapes, and, with a chuckle, longtime hip-hop act Bone Thugs-N-Harmony. And best of all, a non-zombie cameo by Bill Murray. "I was watching some rapper right before Shout Out Out Out Out and next thing you know Bill Murray is standing there. He met a bunch of the Wu Tang guys when I armusch introduced them, but I was just looking at him and enjoying his presence. Finally, the rapper made a really poor choice by pointing him out, then too many clichéd fans went up to him and drove him out. A friend of mine ran up to him and went, 'I know I'm just one of

SADE
SOLDIER OF LOVE

The New Yorker tells us to do things someone like look up an architect, acknowledge the existence of theatre or read things about, or even by Woody Allen. But a person is usually thankful in the end. So it was, with a recent feature on Sade claiming her new album *Soldier of Love* is good, which it is. You may not remember Sade's original emergence, bringing smooth jazz singing in a rather childish landscape of hair metal and bad lyrics-inspired second-generation pop videos. "Smooth Operator" is her most famous song, though "Your Love Is King" was another my go-to friends and I used to sing between lockers.

She is still singing Afrobeat-inspired pop-jazz intricately produced. But the modern Sade has learned a little from hip-hop, not in terms of the way she sings so much as her willingness to mix things up and sample (subtly) from far-ranging sources. So while the song "By Your Side" isn't exactly M.I.A., mixing in kid vocals and other singers gives it a real pulse, a sense of belonging to a world Sade no longer appears to necessarily live in.

The album feels solitary in this, especially as the titular soldier refers to having survived love as a calloused thing, now full of strength unyielded for and unwanted. Never whiny or diva-ish, Sade is simply coolly outlining the parameters of her survival and in doing so has made a beautiful record, leaving one towards Americana than the seaplane-downed allies of her enigmatic past. Try out the haunting ballad of "Bring Me Home," one of many which makes Amy Winehouse's attacks look like tantrums.

★★★★☆

NADA SURF
IF I HAD A HI-FI

You might remember, if nothing else, a '90s video for "Popular" by Nada Surf which suggests we limit steady relationships to one month. A cheerleader is involved as well as a naked, male shower scene. The band has also done some cool covers, especially the Pixies' "Where Is My Mind."

This being 'Nada's sixth album, they've decided to go Cat Power-style, all covers. Lots of bands do this, some succeed and Nada Surf sits right in the middle. It's like putting a bunch of diverse songs through the same effects pedal, in this case polished grunge. Spoon's "Agony of Lullaby" is all right, and I like they way the notes are flattened on Depeche Mode's "Enjoy the Silence." "Question" by the Moody Blues turns into kind of a softer Jay Raastard rocker. Worth a download, then? Well, what isn't?

★★★★☆

OLD SCHOOL
CANDLEMASS

EPICUS DOOMICUS METALLICUS (1986)

Goopy with minor-key Swedish doomslaying like, "that is my only friend, pain is my father." Candlemass might seem like a bit of a joke now. But man, were this shit seriously back in the day, before everyone decided metal was just a cartoon. Singer Johan Långqvist has a great vocal snarl, ranging from eagle war cry to the melting one he opens with on "Demons Dance," a song not about chicks in any way whatsoever. Slow thudding and not played with immense originality, Candlemass has a methodical way about them which one could almost call patience.

★★★★☆



TED LEO & THE PHARMACISTS

The Brutal Bricks

(Wesley Records)

★★★★☆

From its sweetly opening salvo, "When the café doors exploded / I reacted, too / reacted to you," the new record from East Coast punk-pop stalwart Ted Leo comes out swinging. The Brutal Bricks is Leo's sixth record with the Pharmacists and his first with Matador, but the super-charged guitar riffs and spiraling, endlessly eager vocals are as ferocious as ever. Leo's records are always better thought of as collections of songs than cohesive albums, so slating them up is a simple matter of counting the good tracks. Fortunately, there's a ton to love here. "Bottled in Cork" finds Leo tipsy and exuberant on a barstool in Sweden, declaring his

love for his infant nephew. He drops into a smoky lower register for "One Polaroid a Day," then stacks the melodies five high on the pop-pulse "Gimme the Wire." In an era of hype machines and sophomore slumps, Leo and the Pharmacists are as sure a bet as they come. MICHAEL HINGSTON



OLD MAN LUEDECKE

MY HANDS ARE ON FIRE AND OTHER LOVE SONGS

(Bark Music)

★★★★☆

A good portion of contemporary folk releases sound over produced and frankly, unoriginal. That's not the case with the fourth release from Old Man Luedecke. The songs move from traditional, sparse arrangements such as "Lass Vidous," to the majestic beat driven "Woe Betide the Door of the Dead." The banjo tune alone earns it a spot in the Folkways catalogue. Its accompaniment is sincere and understated vocals filled with thoughtful lyrics, no strained put-on accents here. Because there's so much harmony between those two elements, the additional instrumentation crowds the songs at times. "Machy Picchu" sits a little close to a Carter Burwell composition for me, but the rest of the album's familiar melodies belong to Old Man Luedecke. Two more highlights are "Down the Road" and "Inchworm." This is a great companion for his live show, that shouldn't be missed. PAUL COULT'S AND JULIE SKREPMER



ETERKLANG

Magic Chars

(NAD)

★★★★☆

Even the albums most dear to me often fail to make me feel as if I've been lifted off to some magical place. Only a handful of records have done it, and only once each, thanks to Efterklang's *Magic Chars*. Had the pleasure of laying back and letting super sweet vocals, string arrangements and layers of choirs lift me up and take me away, again. The sensation comes very early on in the album and lasts to the bitter-sweet end, and I savoured every moment of it. On the second listen, although the magic had faded slightly, I still felt a deep involvement and hung on every note sung or played. I'm a guy who likes nose, fuzz and long interludes that test most people's patience: so when a soft and easy album can lift me up, I know it's something special.

CRAIG PALMER



BIRDS OF WALES

Betravglia Hotel

(Spartan Music)

★★★★☆

Judging an album by its art is usually not good practice, but the generic hester motif on *Birds of Wales* Betravglia Hotel cover and insert portrays exactly what I imagined to find on the album: simple songs that a rugged hip cat in a low-cut V-neck shirt can learn on his acoustic guitar in an instant to swallow in a gift four years his junior. I also find it fantastically sultry that the third track on the album is titled

"Uninteresting," because it was at that moment I realized the album was exactly that. It opens with the single "My Lady in July," which received significant radio play in 2006, and I doesn't really shift gears from there. It's just a slow boring ride through all of songs of simple melodies and overdone lyrical content.

CRAIG PALMER



OPUS ROAD

Opus Road

(Offshore Audio Productions)

★★★★☆

Roughly 10 years ago, I would tune my radio to *The Bear* every night before bed. I was asked to hear the Top 10 countdown featuring Hootie & the Blowfish, Finger Eleven and other bands of their ilk. I consider myself to have been musically inept at that point in my life. *Opus Road's* self-titled EP gives me an unpleasant nostalgic wave of that time. They are the generic college band singing about lost love (which I really doubt exists), crystal clear sound engineered to perfection (that's a bad thing), and riffs and solos for the sake of having riffs and solos. This band has no soul. It feels as prebattered as the pop-sensations that continually storm the nations. Granted that, because this is an EP, there may be more meat to the bones of this band, but I imagine it to be tough and stringy.

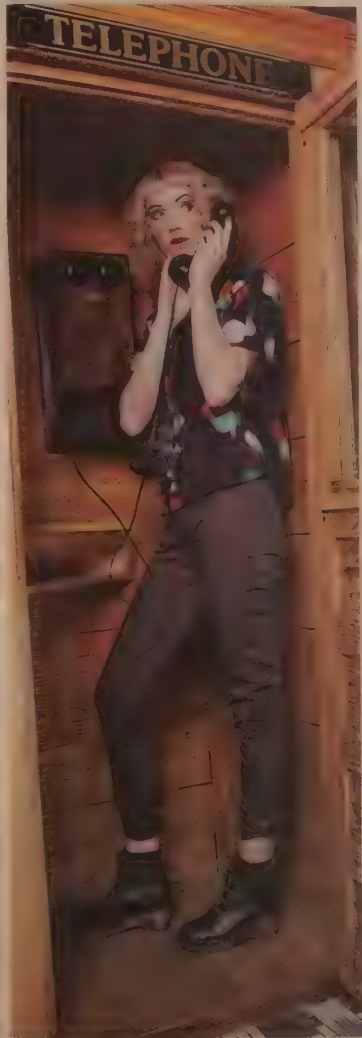
CRAIG PALMER

NRKLRKS!
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Spring Fling

A FASHION FORWARD DETECTIVE STORY

BY BECKY HALLIDAY



They say that spring is the time for awakening – your dreary, dark-at-5-p.m. wardrobe that is. But for the subjects of my latest case, spring was about awakening their most secret, lustful desires.

It was a Friday afternoon in March, with snow pecking the windows of the Hotel Sellark, when I first started following Larry Buchanan. Mrs. Buchanan telephoned me after seeing my advertisement in the local bulletin: she had a hunch that when her husband told her he bought a yacht, he was really boarding something else.

I specialize in women and their hunches – the hunch that your man is being unfaithful will nag at you like that pair of Marc by Marc ballet flats that you waited for with bated breath to go on sale but when you finally saw the sale the smallest size, they had were a half-size too big. I know women's intuition. I've got it – and shoes – in spades. I'm Petunia Green, the Fashion Forward Detective.

The stakeout required me to remain inconspicuous – a challenge, but I was up for it. I had already purchased two utilitarian yet surprising, ly-luxe trench coats – a staple for any legitimate fashion forward detective – in khaki green with metallic buttons and classic beige with tortoise-shell. The studded black ankle boots were a splurge, but the wooden heel camouflaged me ingeniously.

Buchanan entered, wanting the world to notice his companion and her wine-coloured vintage clutch at the end of his arm – or perhaps how his green salt-and-pepper fedora complimented his electric pink-orange shirt. I recognized the dame immediately. She was an actress known for her on-stage hijinks on Friday and Saturday nights with the

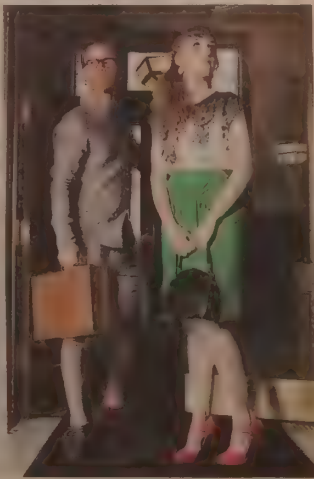
foremost improvisational theatre company in town. She was clearly anxious to proceed with her liaison before she made her weekly appearance in front of her adoring fans. She tapped the bell impatiently with her navy-gloved finger. Her cat eyes shone like rhinestones in a brooch.

The lovers came each afternoon at the same time – to the hotel that is. Mostly they just sat in the Mahogany Bar, where she could perch on the long, sleek counter and admire herself in the mirrors. Buchanan's eyes, and then thick black frames, were focused only on her, though they darted occasionally to check the level of the tequila. Buchanan talked to her about his yacht – which he had actually purchased, though he didn't have much use for it – living

as he did in Edmonton at the time. He dressed for a summer afternoon on deck in striped nautical-themed T-shirts with a handsome sky-blue cardigan and linen shorts, or purple plaid shorts with a soft, charcoal woven shirt.

Indeed, if anyone was getting swept away at the Hotel Sellark, it was your favourite Fashion Forward Detective. The actress captivated me like a cotton sundress in a Whyte Avenue storefront. Say what you wanted about this dame's personal life, the woman knew how to combine a print with a solid. The flowers on the silks and sheer jerseys of her dresses were the reason spring hadn't yet arrived. Edmonton's gardens were scared to emerge from the ground for fear of looking inferior.

The longer I watched the actress in her perfect spring ensembles – her kelly green skirt with a hint of flapper paired expertly with a sheer white top with black flowered décolletage (and cherry red Repetto heels!) – the more determined I became that I myself could not simply fade into the mahogany wood of the Hotel Sellark. This meant spending all of my money on the most dangerous items of all – statement pieces: Bright, flower-print heels, a burgundy straw hat with silver trim – until one afternoon, I realized the actress had spotted me. In fact, we were face to face, my fashionable cover about to be blown.





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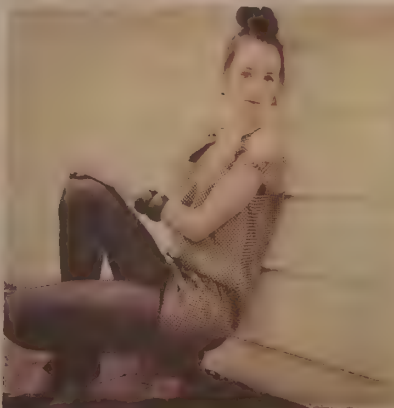
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Documentaries Show Global Musical Underbelly

FROM ISLAMIC PUNK TO NORWEGIAN BLACK METAL, THESE METRO FLICKS 'GIVE THE FINGER TO BOTH SIDES'

TAQWACORE: THE BIRTH OF PUNK ISLAM

Apr 18 7 p.m.

Apr 18 5 p.m.

UNTIL THE LIGHT TAKES US

Apr 18 4 p.m.

Apr 18 5 p.m.

Video Cinema (Zedler Hall, Citadel Theatre)

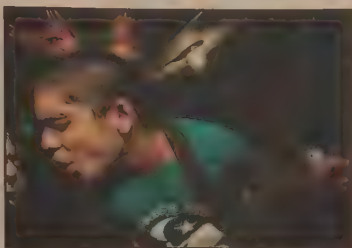
BY JENNY FENIAK

Music in some form has always been with us, and has since morphed and evolved to express and exemplify various cultures, classes, tastes and temperaments.

These two documentaries from 2009 focus on subgenres of our global musical underbelly. But instead of your average documentary showing concert footage and behind-the-scenes interviews, these films manifest a message and expose some of the most colourful, and rarely seen corners of our cultural fabric.

TAQWACORE: THE BIRTH OF PUNK ISLAM

Taqwacore is based on a fictional novel by Michael Muhammed Knight. A white American kid with a white supremacist father, Knight



A member of The Komins rocks out in new documentary *Taqwacore*. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

read the biography of Malcolm X when he was 15 and a couple of years later he travelled to Palestine and converted to Islam. The religious indoctrination began to mute his ideology and passion, so he penned a book that merged his Muslim faith and the punk rock ideals of his college peers.

This creative project sparked an online movement of young adults actually living what Knight wrote about. In an effort to consolidate, Knight acquired a green school bus, a few Muslim punk rock bands and took the *Taqwa* Tour across America where this once-unheard-of commu-

nity began to multiply.

With cranked-up, loud music and rebellious teens, it's a typical punk rock scene except for the songs and lyrics like, "I want to fuck you during Ramadan." Laughable at first, what translates is also man's land between one of the world's strictest religions and a lack of faith in how it and society dictates everyday life.

The film cuts to Knight reading from his book and as he says, "we're dealing with a minority of a minority of a minority that's giving the finger to both sides."

Members of The Komins are the

most constant characters and half way through the movie, they travel back to Pakistan with Knight. The group flips the context of this movement to the Islamic heartland to see how it translates, while also pursuing and refining their own Muslim faith.

But out of sheer frustration, Knight and The Komins pull out all the stops for a true punk rock conclusion.

UNTIL THE LIGHT TAKES US
Departing from the commercial trend death metal had become, a handful of Norwegian musicians gave birth to black metal.

Specifically, Oystein "Euronymous" Aarseth created the core riff for black metal, a style that rebels against the metal structure with a ragged approach and rough instrumentation.

But *Until the Light Takes Us*, and the genre, go far beyond the music. It's rare in that as a documentary, it plays as a thriller, with suspense and dramatic turns in the scene and between players.

Mayhem, considered the first black metal band, was founded by Aarseth in the mid-80s and soon brought in singer Per Yngve Odden, a.k.a. Dead A. (a more, and darkly depressed individual). Odden introduced extreme

stage personality, behaviour and the black-and-white corpse paint to the genre. Rumor has it that Aarseth murdered Odden personally, but his death was ruled a suicide. Yet, Aarseth found the body and took brutal photos of the corpse, with a shotgun wound to the forehead, essentially used as the cover of Mayhem's scotching *Dawn of the Blackhearts*.

In 1992, four in thunder Varg Vikernes joined Mayhem as Count Grishnackh, and two years later, was arrested for the murder of Aarseth. Beyond the murder, Vikernes was also guilty of arson for burning several Christian churches.

Gylfe Fenner Nagell of Darkthrone, another founding group, offers his black metal musings, reflecting on photographs and relics of the time. But Vikernes' interview from prison offers the greatest insight and understanding of the forces at play behind the music and personalities, as well as his disgust for the falsity of corporate commercialism and the negative cultural force of Christianity.

Throughout Nagell offers a running perspective: "A black metal, with the concluding thought, 'I wish this thing didn't turn into a trend. That's what fucking sucked, and sucks still. But, people like to dress up

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CHINESE DOCUMENTARY - REVIEW

Catch The Last Train Home

**NEW FILM DOCUMENTS
CHINESE MIGRANT WORKERS
AS THEY TAKE THE TRAIN
HOME TO THEIR LOVED ONES**

THE LAST TRAIN HOME
Directed by Lu Xun Fan
★★★★☆

BY MAURICE TOUGAS

Despite its position as an economic behemoth, China remains one of the world's most closed and perplexing societies.

Last Train Home, a gripping and fascinating documentary from Chinese-Canadian filmmaker Lixin Fan, shows us a side of China we have never seen.

Every spring, at the Chinese New Year, a staggering 130 million migrant workers flee the cities to return home for the holiday. This is not an orderly exodus. The film opens with a jaw-dropping panorama of a sea of humanity, as tens of thousands of workers wait with truly admirable patience for trains to appear. When the gates finally open, a tidal wave of people surges through the gates and packs themselves onto trains for days-long journeys to the country.

This is not a country for claustrophobics.

The film focuses on one couple, the Zhangs, who left the countryside 16 years ago to make money in the city in the hopes of making enough money to provide for a better life for their children, Qin and Yang. The Zhangs spend numbing hour after hour sewing together cheap clothing for the North American and world markets. The years of separation, however, have fractured the family, perhaps irrevocably. Qin, their typically headstrong 17-year-old daughter, doesn't



Qin Zhang, rebellious teenager at the centre of *The Last Train Home* (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

see the value of school, which her parents see as the only way for their children to improve their lot in life. (Upon every visit home, the first thing the parents ask their children about is their grades.) The children are being raised by their grandmother, who dispenses pearls of wisdom like "Eat your bitter melons. Yang, so you won't get pimples."

obtrusively, allowing the camera to tell the story with no narration and a bare minimum of appropriate music.

Only someone like Fan, a former news cameraman for Chinese state television, could tell this story, and what a beautifully photographed documentary this is — it is truly cinematic in quality, deserving of the

**EVERY SPRING, A 130 MILLION CHINESE MIGRANT WORKERS
FLEE THE CITIES TO RETURN HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS.**

Qin, estranged from her parents, quits school to make money in the city, following the same painful path as her parents. The dispute escalates to a explosive moment of domestic violence that is so painful to watch. I wanted the filmmaker to drop his camera and intervene.

But intervening would have violated director Fan's filmmaking ethos, which was to follow the Zhangs un-

big screen. And you have to admire the photographers for keeping track of their subjects in conditions best described as chaotic.

Of course, *Last Train Home* is much more than just a personal story. It is a reflection of a culture in transition, hurtling towards an uncertain future, personalized by the Zhangs. *Last Train Home* is eye opening and never less than fascinating.

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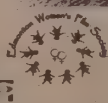
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Crash This Hot Tub Party



John Cusack, Clark Duke and friends travel back to '80s comedies in *Hot Tub Time Machine* | PHOTO: SUPPLIER

**JOHN CUSACK IS SOLID,
BUT THE DAILY SHOW'S ROB
CORDDRY IS A SCENE-STEALER
IN THIS FLASHBACK COMEDY**

HOT TUB TIME MACHINE

Directed by Steve Pink, starring John Cusack, Chevy Chase, Craig Robinson, Rob Corddry

BY PETER HEMMINGER

The premise of *Hot Tub Time Machine* is straightforward and dumb as dirt — it's all right there in the title, give or take the finer details. Three old friends (and a young hanger-on) head to a ski resort to recapture past glories and forget about their me-

hinted at by an exasperatingly cryptic hot tub repairman Chevy Chase who is either more knowing than he lets on, or just plain inarticulate. The more vague the rules, the better, really. *Hot Tub Time Machine's* plot may be the movie's hook, but it's still just there to hang jokes on.

■ wouldn't ■ an '80s comedy without nostalgic references aplenty but while the spot-the-fad sight-gags are a big part of the film's repertoire, they thankfully take a back seat to the dynamics of the cast. John Cusack (who also produced) is excellent in a role that recalls the sensitive sad sacks ■ his '80s heyday. he's apparently still in touch with his inner

stereotype thanks to a genuinely likeable performance. And Craig Robinson (*The Office*) steals more than a few scenes as an emasculated former rocker, but Rob Corddry (*The Daily Show*) is the real stand-out. Playing a complete alcoholic prick, he dominates every one of his scenes with his schoolboy taunts and general dickishness. The character could easily become grating, but Corddry's timing is so spot on and his delivery so earnest that he manages the transition from "that asshole" to "our asshole."

In spirit, *Hot Tub Time Machine* is closer to the Apatow school of comedy than you'd expect from a team of

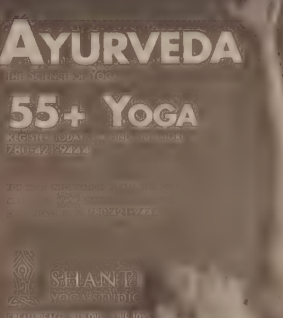
EXACTLY ONE SHIT-LOAD OF BOOZE, ONE RUSSIAN ENERGY DRINK
AND ONE MYSTERIOUSLY HIGH-TECH HOT TUB LATER,
THEY AWAKEN TO FIND THEMSELVES NOT JUST IN THE 1980S,
BUT ALSO IN THE MIDST OF A SLOBS-VERSUS-SNOBS COMEDY.

Joe lives. Exactly one shit-load of booze, one illegal Russian energy drink and one mysteriously high-tech hot tub later, they awaken to find themselves not just in the 1980s, but also in the midst of a slob-versus-jobs comedy – like *Ski School*, but with three decades of hindsight [their role in the past and the rules for avoiding complete space-time destruction – always a worry in the paradox-laden realm of time travel] –

mope, which is good news for fans who cut their teeth on *Say Anything* and *Better Off Dead*. Director Steve Pink clearly gets Cusack's sensibility too - though his only other directorial effort is the forgotten 2006 comedy *Accepted*, he wrote the scripts for *Grosse Pointe Blank* and *High Fidelity*, the last two flat-out good films in the actor-producer's filmography.

As Cusack's nephew, Clark Duke breaks through his computer nerd

writers, whose few other credits include this year's much-reviled *Side Out of My League*. Pedigree aside, their script strikes the right balance between gross-out humour, nostalgia and genuine male bonding – there's a hint of sweetness underneath all the puke and semen, but only enough to stay on the right side of crass. Only time will tell if it ages better than the '80s comedies it skewers, but either way it's a welcome flashback.



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64 ★★★★★ 97
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★★★★★

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NEW THIS WEEK

UNTIL THE LIGHT TAKES US

Exploring the roots of Norwegian black metal, this documentary offers an intimate look at the music and culture, focusing heavily on Varg Vikernes, imprisoned for church burnings and the murder of his Mayhem bandmate. Review on pg. 17

★★★★

TAJQAWAKE: THE BIRTH OF PUNK ISLAM

What began as a fictional novel melding the Muslim faith with punk rock ideals morphs into a real and unlikely movement that spreads across America and to the Islamic heartlands of Pakistan. Review on pg. 17

★★★★

LAST THIN HOME

This documentary follows a family, one of millions, who make a horrific annual trek home from the hinterlands where they keep employment as China grows as a global super power. Review on pg. 18

★★★★

THE LAST SONG

A drama about a teenage girl (Miley Cyrus) estranged from her recently divorced parents, who is sent to spend the summer with her father. Then she finds her first love

CLASH OF THE TITANS

This highly produced remake pits the mortal son of Zeus (Liam Neeson) against Hades and his minions of the underworld, who are spreading their evil ways across the earth.

ALICE PLAYING

GREENBERG

Ben Stiller stars as a man past the prime of youth and a promising music career, caught in a series of uncomfortable moments balanced out by the super nova forces of his love interest Florence, played by Greta Gerwig.

★★★★

HOT TUB TIME MACHINE

Four middle-aged men, apathetic with their adult lives, revisit their youth on a trip back to the '80s thanks to a time-bending hot tub.

Review on pg. 19

★★★★

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON

Featuring the voices of America Ferrera and Gerard Butler, this animated features tells the story of a young Viking who wants to be a dragon hunter, until he becomes the owner on one, and enlightened by the creature on his own.

COOKING WITH STELLA

A Canadian diplomat moves to India with her child and husband, who wants to make Indian cuisine. He turns to the embassy's chef, who has her own agenda on the household, resulting in smart, fresh entertainment.

★★★★

CHLOE

A controlling woman tries an escort to seduce her husband, who the already suspects of having an affair. But events begin to escalate, threatening the family in this new thriller from Canadian director Atom Egoyan.

★★★★

REPO MEN

Set in the future, medical breakthroughs have allowed organs to be mechanically reproduced and bought as replacement parts. But for those who can't pay their bill, the repo men are their worst nightmare.

THE BOUNTY HUNTER

A bounty hunter's next assignment is to take out his ex-wife, a reporter unraveling a murder cover-up. But she gives him the slip and the chase is on. Starring Gerard Butler and Jennifer Aniston.

THE GHOST WRITER

Roman Polanski establishes a compelling mystery involving a replacement ghost writer for the subjects on an ex-British prime minister facing. His job is facing possible war crimes charges, a body washes up on the beach and whatever happened to the first writer.

★★★★

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

Based on Jeff Kinney's illustrated novel, it's

the story of a student who documents his failed attempts to diffuse the endless social landmines of middle school in his journal.

GREEN ZONE

Starring Matt Damon, Green Zone tells of a U.S. army officer who goes rogue after receiving faulty information regarding the weapons of mass destruction he's hunting down in an unstable region.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

In Tim Burton's adaptation of the Lewis Carroll classic, 19-year-old Alice returns to her childhood fantasy world III the story of the Red Queen's reign of terror. Starring Johnny Depp.

★★★★

SHUTTER ISLAND

Leonardo DiCaprio plays a U.S. marshal in the 1950s, sent to investigate the escape of a murderer from Boston's Shutter Island Aschcliffe Hospital. But he's finding opposition from the doctors, whose treatments range from unethical to absolutely sinister.

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LOOKING WITH TITIA		CLASH OF THE TITANS		DIARY OF A WIMPY KID	
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PRINCESS		THE BOUNTY HUNTER		HOT TUB TIME MACHINE	
#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
CHILD		HOT TUB TIME MACHINE		THE BOUNTY HUNTER	
#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
PARKLAND		SOUTH EDMONTON		CLASH OF THE TITANS	
#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
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#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
THE LAST SONG		CLASH OF THE TITANS		CLASH OF THE TITANS	
#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID		CLASH OF THE TITANS		CLASH OF THE TITANS	
#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
HOT TUB TIME MACHINE		CLASH OF THE TITANS		CLASH OF THE TITANS	
#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
THE BOUNTY HUNTER		CLASH OF THE TITANS		CLASH OF THE TITANS	
#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
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#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
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#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)		#172 (10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45, 10:45)	
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ASTROLOGY • APRIL 1-7 • BY THE KID

CRUISIN' THE COSMOS

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)

Now that your task has finally been completed, it's time for your ass to be seated. Keep a to-go and rein in your ego because if you start prioritizing around the place like a prima donna, expect for you'll wait faster than flowers in a sauna!

TAURUS (APRIL 20 - MAY 20)

Just 'cause you're a fixed sign doesn't mean you can't ever change. Heck, sometimes you've got no choice — like this weekend. But as big a pain in the butt it can be, you should be aware it'll turn out alright and it ain't necessarily something to light!

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 20)

Friends? Your heart is cold and everything, but if you're careful you could end up causing yourself way more work than it's worth. Chasin' after anything in the city that's shiny and glittery is a lotta talk that might only get you the world's biggest collection of pop-can tabs and smoke-puff foil!

CANCER (JUNE 21 - JULY 22)

You've got your work cut out for you, since spring's the time to tidy up all the dead rot in your yard and in your life, too. Take up all the scattered thoughts layin' around and get out the poop-scoop to clean up all the crap that's accumulated recently in your vicinity. That'll make it much more pleasant — and safer — to play on your own property!

LEO (JULY 23 - AUG. 22)

Don't go doin' something dopey this week just so you can prove you ain't a cowardly lion. Impulsively pourin' to protect your rep could do more damage to it rather than pump it up. This is especially true if you've been played since your ensuing attack'll likely be mislaid!

VIRGO (AUG. 23 - SEPT. 22)

You Virgos are renowned for your super selective taste so, when you have an omnipotent desire for something, you're willin' to do whatever you need to attain it 'cause it's well worth it to you. You'll work your ass off for it, try to trade for it and you'll even go outside of the rules to get it if it need be. But have you ever tried just asking for help?

LIBRA (SEPT. 23 - OCT. 22)

Hasn't your bubble burst on it as always a big-league burster. But lucky since you hold the scales of balance, you'll be perfectly aware of all the good that comes out of it as well as the bad. Keep your mind on this merit should make it easier to grin and bear it!

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 22)

Use all good loyal subjects of Bacchus, you tend to get some of your best ideas when you're blotto. The problem is that trying to put 'em into practice while you're still coked is a pro-poor strategy. Implement the idea when you're straight or no matter how good the notion, what it'll produce, you'll hate!

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22 - DEC. 21)

This weekend the moon is in your sign and you'll be directly hooked up to the divine, so pay damn close attention to whatever message may come in over that line. It might seem silly now but someday it's gonna set you up for success — and that ain't no new age BS!

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22 - JAN. 19)

I know Cap, you've gotta chill out a bit on the material side of things. When you put your state in stuff, it's easier to get stressed out. Try centering your attention on yourself rather than what you possess and you'll soon figure out what features you'll have for all-time, not just until the next model rolls off the line!

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20 - FEB. 18)

It's been a hard road and although you may not be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel, rest assured that all the hard work you've done so far will bring you there sooner than you think. It's a good thing too, 'cause you're not exactly known for your patience, are you?

PISCES (FEB. 19 - MARCH 20)

You've been swimmin' in the same pool for too damn long and you're startin' to notice it's become a stagnant pond. Problem is, you're too scared to set out for somethin' new. Well, so was the first fish to find itself on shore — but after it had a whiff of pure fresh oxygen, it was stuck around on land for some time!

You can contact The Kid at cutinbecome@aol.com.

SAVAGE (cont'd from p. 26)

who unfurled a balled-up white towel may find herself staring at what looks like the flag of imperial Japan. And if your guests are courteous enough to strip the lead before they leave, those balled-up sheets go straight into the wash, too.

I'm a young-adult gay virgin.

Recently, though, an incredibly sweet, incredibly intelligent guy expressed a desire to blow me (among many other things). He also happens to be, without exaggeration, the hottest guy I've ever met in my life. I lusted after him for the better part of a year before I found out he was gay. So, naturally, I want to pursue this. There are complications. Along with my obligatory first-time jitters, I have to deal with the reality that we will be working together all day, every day, through the fall. Which could be awkward if there's any awkwardness after the fact. Which brings me to my main worry: I'm not circumcised. I've always been a

little insecure about it. The one friend I trust enough to ask about this basically said that she would immediately abort oral if she realized a guy was uncirc.

If I don't do this, I'll regret it for the rest of my life (he really is that hot), but my friend's opinion has me worried beyond reason.

I'm at a loss, Dan. Please help? *Uncircumcised 'N' Completely Unexperienced Teen*

You shouldn't put too much stock in one friend's opinion about uncirc. UNCUT, particularly if that friend ain't all that experienced either and — I hope all the sex-and-forensics-positive single ladies will forgive me for this — when that friend is a lady girl. Some young women are squeamish about oral generally, and forensics particularly, because they don't have much experience with cock, cut or uncirc.

Gay men are much less likely to be squeamish about uncirc cock; indeed, lots of gay men prefer uncirc cock. My God, UNCUT, there are enough gay men out there with a fetish for foreskins to support a foreskin-spe-

cific porn genre for gay men. And even if this guy doesn't have a strong preference for uncirc cock, UNCUT, it's highly unlikely that he'll be turned off by your clean, uncirc cock.

As for any potential awkwardness after the fact, UNCUT, if the hottest guy you've ever swapped blowjobs with in your life — presuming the exchange of blowjobs goes down — is cold and distant, or even hostile, it might be because he doesn't want to get with you again. And like an idiot/asshole/amateur, he believes that being a dick is the only way to keep you from getting the wrong idea. If that happens, UNCUT, you'll have to be the grown-up. Get him alone and tell him that, hey, it's totally cool if he doesn't want to mess around again, but you don't want things to be weird. Tell him you intend to burn through any lingering feelings of awkwardness by being civil and polite to him and that you would appreciate the same from him.

Find the Savage Lovecast (Dan's weekly podcast) every Tuesday at thestranger.com/savage or email savage@thestranger.com.



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Escort Past — And Present — Dooms Relationship



SAVAGE LOVE: DAN SAVAGE

DENIAL DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT A READER SLEPT WITH ANOTHER MAN FOR \$3,000

I am writing to you because I know my boyfriend reads your column religiously. I don't know what to do. My boyfriend of almost two years broke up with me yesterday over the fact that I used to be an escort. He went through my e-mails and saw that I was answering ads, putting ads up, sending photos. We had been planning a future together, talking about moving in, getting married, having kids, etc., and then this happened. I know I either should've told him about my past or shouldn't have succumbed to temptation. I started doing this again a year ago because I got fired from my

job and couldn't find anything. I was so in love with this guy that I didn't mind staying at home waiting for him all day, doing everything and anything to make him happy. It took a toll on me, and I couldn't support myself. Then a friend recommended that I start escorting again. And then this guy e-mailed me saying he would give me \$3,000 to sleep with him, and I couldn't say no. What do I do, Dan? I can't eat, sleep, or even do anything. All I want is to hold my boyfriend and

matized, also believe that a sex worker's romantic partners have a right to know about the sex work. Just as people have a general right to know when their partners are sleeping with others, sex workers' romantic partners have a right to know about the sex work — and consent to it — because it places them at heightened risk of sexually transmitted infections. There's probably no salvaging this relationship. The scale of the betrayal is just too great, NORTH, and your efforts to shift blame — it's your

makes you feel this way — ashamed and dirty — please stop doing sex work.

What's the etiquette for having sex when you're a guest in another person's house? Friends spent the night and shared some passion. I don't have a problem with this. However, this was period-sex, and I was left with bloody, sex-stained sheets. Am I wrong to be annoyed? Can I ask them to replace the sheets? *Hostess With The Menstrues*

sex-negative, HWTM, it's possible they were so mortified by the mess — evidence that they'd had sex! — and were paralyzed by shame. If that's the case, let a slide, buy your own replacements, and cultivate other friendships.

The etiquette for having sex when you're a guest in another person's house goes like this: Polite guests do not leave a bloody, spunky, or santonumy mess for their hosts to clean up. Staying in the guest room and desperately horny? Sounds like the perfect opportunity for an extended — and tidy — oral-sex session. Staying in the guest room and want to fuck? Fuck on the desk, fuck standing up, fuck in the shower. If your partner is one of those only-in-bed, only-on-my-back types, lay a towel down on your host's sheets — or, better yet, a couple of your own T-shirts — and fuck away. Thoughtful hosts purchase dark sheets and towels for guest suites. And if guests leave a towel on the floor of the bathroom in a neat little ball, toss that towel in the wash — with extra bleach if the towels are white — without unfurling and inspecting. Be warned: An unwise host

SAVAGE cont'd on p.25

I DON'T WANT TO SALT YOUR WOUNDS, NORTH, BUT YOUR BOYFRIEND DIDN'T FIND OUT THAT YOU "USED" TO BE AN ESCORT. HE FOUND OUT THAT YOU ARE AN ESCORT. THERE IS PROBABLY NO SALVAGING THIS RELATIONSHIP.

to be held. How do I make things better? I am disgusted with the person I am and feel so dirty. *No One Real To Hold* I don't want to salt your wounds, NORTH, but your boyfriend didn't find out that you "used to be an escort." He found out that you are an escort. Even those of us who believe that sex work should be legal, and that sex workers shouldn't be stig-

matized, also believe that a sex worker's romantic partners have a right to know about the sex work. Just as people have a general right to know when their partners are sleeping with others, sex workers' romantic partners have a right to know about the sex work — and consent to it — because it places them at heightened risk of sexually transmitted infections. There's probably no salvaging this relationship. The scale of the betrayal is just too great, NORTH, and your efforts to shift blame — it's your

Finaly, NORTH, if doing sex work

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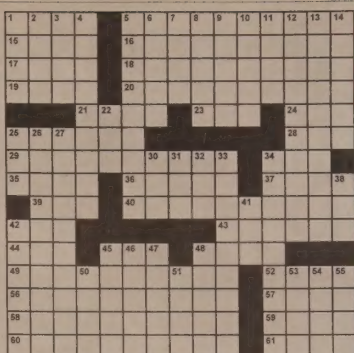
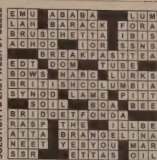
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FREEFILLIN'

TAKE THE PLUNGE
INTO RANDOM VOCAB.

JONESHY CROSSWORD by Matt Jones
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(editor@joneshycrosswords.com)

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1 Word after rubber or brass
- 5 They eject matter, theoretically
- 15 Sunburn remedy
- 16 Make all the same, to a Brit
- 17 City in central Arizona
- 18 Reconciliations
- 19 Canned
- 20 Gets comfy, perhaps
- 21 Spanish equivalent of Mmes.
- 23 Amtrak stop; abbr.
- 24 Hwy.
- 25 Doofuses
- 28 Circus precaution
- 29 From Sumatra or Timor, old-style
- 34 Leather shoe, for short
- 35 "In that case..."
- 36 As predicted
- 37 Coup d'...
- 39 Athletic supporter?
- 40 Isolated places
- 42 Crafty
- 43 Designation for driver's licenses
- 44 Like dog kisses
- 45 Opposite of NNE

- 48 Israeli singer Naim with the 2008 hit "New Soul"
- 49 Skating show
- 52 Long stare
- 56 Logical philosopher
- 57 Finto
- 58 Type of job that pays the lowest, usually
- 59 Cartoon explorer
- 60 2000 Sting duet with Cheb Mami
- 61 Spoiled kid

DOWN

- 1 Rose Bowl champs
- 2 Sean's foil on "Celebrity Jeopardy!"
- 3 Deviated septum site
- 4 Unstoppable regarding
- 5 Comment about the pretentious
- 6 "It's ___ hell in here"
- 7 "Everything's fine"
- 8 Vocal qualities
- 9 Discharge
- 10 Masters of the Universe leader
- 11 Cash for strippers
- 12 They may include lyrics
- 13 Station wagons, in England

- 14 Part of a sonnet
- 22 Diamond stat
- 25 Opus ___
- 26 Ice cream shop option
- 27 Writing for grades
- 30 "Fingerprinting" sample
- 31 Netherlands-based tribunal, for short
- 32 Black and white bird
- 33 English city known for coal and beer
- 34 Hard rock guitar legends, to some
- 38 Airport screening org.

- 41 The A of IPA
- 42 Ran a check card
- 45 Mythical horn-dog
- 46 Tipped over
- 47 Go back and forth
- 48 Survey answers, sometimes
- 50 Wax, in French
- 51 II ___ (operatic pop group)
- 53 Company that comes a-calling
- 54 Number in the Cookie Monster song "They Not Take That Away From Me"
- 55 Part of QED

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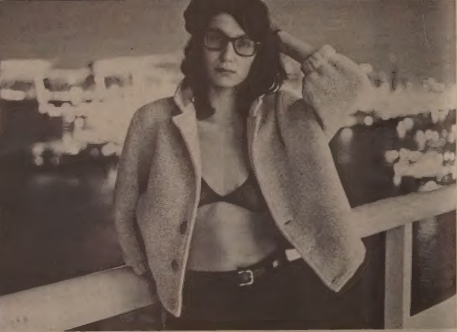


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